UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/1992/4
12 May 1992

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Working Group on Indigenous Populations
Tenth session
20-31 July 1992
Item 5 of the provisional agenda

REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS PERTAINING TO THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS OF INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS, INCLUDING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND STATES

Note by the Secretary-General

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GE.92-12453/3986H

Introduction

1. By its resolution 1982/34 of 7 May 1982, the Economic and Social Council authorized the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to establish annually a working group on indigenous populations to review developments pertaining to the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigneous populations, including information requested by the Secretary-General annually, and to give special attention to the evolution of standards concerning the rights of indigenous populations.

2. The Sub-Commission, in its resolution 1991/30 of 29 August 1991, requested the Secretary-General to transmit the report of the Working Group on its ningth session (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1991/40/Rev.1) to Governments for specific comments and suggestions for the completion of the first reading of the text of the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1991/40/Rev.1, annex II) and the beginning of the second reading at the tenth session. The Commission on Human Rights endorsed this request in its resolution 1992/44 of 3 March 1992. In accordance with these resolutions, appropriate communications were sent to Governments. The present document contains replies received as of 12 May 1992. Further replies, if any, will be included in addenda to this document.

[12 November 1992]
[Original: English]

Thailand*

Hill-tribe welfare and development

Background

1. One of the great sources of pride of the Thai people is their rich and diverse ethnic and cultural heritage. The hill-tribes of Thailand and their distinct lifestyles are part of this colourful heritage. These tribes are among the many ethnic groups that constitute Thai society. They are not considered to be minorities nor indigenous people but as Thais who are able to enjoy fundamental rights and are protected by the laws of the Kingdom as any other Thai citizen.

2. According to a recent survey, there are some 500,000 hill-tribesmen in Thailand belonging to nine different hill-tribes, namely the Hmong, Yao, Lisu, Akha, Lahu, Karen, Khamu, H'Tin and the Luha, each tribe having inherited its own distinct language, customs, norms, traditions and lifestyle.

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* Information contained herein was furnished by the Department of Public Welfare and the Office of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Interior of Thailand.

3. The hill-tribes of Thailand can be found in the remote areas of the northern, central and southern regions of Thailand, spread out over 20 provinces. Because of the lack of contact with the outside world, some of these hill-tribes have, in the past, engaged in certain practices, for instance shifting agriculture and opium cultivation, unconscious of and unable to comprehend the environmental and social repercussions of their livelihood. Moreover, because a majority of the hill-tribe people are illiterate and lack the necessary knowledge either to earn a decent income or to look after the sanitary conditions of their own community, they often live in conditions of poverty, poor health and malnutrition.

Government policies and measures to assist the hill-tribes

4. In 1959, the National Committee on Hill-Tribes was established to formulate and review national policies to address the welfare and development needs of the hill-tribes. The policies and government activities that have been launched since have been oriented towards improving the quality of life of the hill-tribes based on their self-reliance and encouraging them to become productive and responsible Thai citizens, while at the same time enabling them to maintain their cultural identity in a modernizing world. These policies were also aimed at finding an alternative means of livelihood for the hill-tribes in order to end their unconscious destruction of the ecological and social environment. Regional, provincial and district committees have also been created to support and complement national policies in this regard.

5. The objectives of hill-tribe welfare and development policies of the Royal Thai Government include, inter alia, the following:

(a) Allocation of land for settlement and agriculture to the hill-tribes in order to secure their permanent settlement in fertile areas;

(b) Organization of the administrative structure of the hill-tribe communities, in order to promote their self-administration as well as their awareness of and participation in the affairs of the Kingdom;

(c) Introduction of economic and social development that are geared towards the conservation of natural resources into the region where the hill-tribes live, in order to enable them to benefit from and to promote their appreciation of their natural and social environment;

(d) Enforcement of law and order.

6. Hill-tribe development projects which have been launched as a result of the hill-tribe welfare and development policies are comprehensive in scope and includes occupational and social development.

7. Occupational development programmes undertaken by the Department of Public Welfare are aimed at promoting the application of modern agricultural techniques by the hill-tribes, such as the cultivation of high-yield cash-crops based on crop rotation methods, for immediate consumption and income generating purposes.

8. Social development programmes have been undertaken by the Department of Public Welfare in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Public Health, and include the provision of education, medical programmes and primary health care, family-planning services, sanitation and water supply programmes, and social development training in such areas as public health care, village development, farming, etc.

9. Furthermore, special projects to benefit the hill-tribes have also been launched, some of which are under royal patronage, and others being undertaken in cooperation with other friendly Governments. These projects include: The Royal Initiation Projects, the Thai-Australian Highland Development Projects, the Thai-Norway Highland Development Project, the Thai-German Highland Development Project.

Results of hill-tribe welfare and development policies

10. As a result of the above-mentioned policies of the Royal Thai Government, the well-being of the hill-tribes in Thailand has improved to the point where they stand a better chance not only to preserve and develop their own culture but also to contribute towards the development of the Kingdom.

11. Hill-tribes in Thailand have become more conscious of the need to preserve the environment and have shifted away from destructive methods of agriculture towards those that are more permanent and environmentally sound.

12. Hill-tribes have been able to earn a higher income through the introduction of high-yield cash-crop cultivation which has superseded the traditional cultivation of opium.

13. An increasing number of hill-tribesmen are benefiting from their access to educational facilities and enjoy a healthier life.

14. Hill-tribes are beginning to learn modern ways of managing the affairs of their community and have become more knowledgeable of the affairs of the Kingdom.

UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/1992/5
12 May 1992

ENGLISH
Original: SPANISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Working Group on Indigenous Populations
Tenth session
20-31 July 1992
Item 5 of the provisional agenda

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Note by the Secretary-General

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Inter-American Indian Institute 2

GE.92-12457/4135H

Introduction

1. By its resolution 1982/34 of 7 May 1982, the Economic and Social Council authorized the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to establish annually and working group on indigenous populations to review developments pertaining to the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous populations, including information requested by the Secretary-General annually, and to give special attention to the evolution of standards concerning the rights of indigenous populations.

2. The Sub-Commission, in its resolution 1991/30 of 29 August 1991, requested the Secretary-General to transmit the report of the Working Group on its ninth session (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1991/40/Rev.1) to Governments for specific comments and suggestions for the completion of the first reading of the text of the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1991/40/Rev.1, annex II) and the beginning of the second reading at the tenth session. The Commission on Human Rights endorsed this request in its resolution 1992/44 of 3 March 1992. In accordance with these resolutions, appropriate communications were sent to Governments. The present document contains replies received as of 12 May 1992. Further replies, if any, will be included in addenda to this document.

[20 March 1992]
[Original: Spanish]

Inter-American Indian Institute

1. The Inter-American Indian Institute (IAII), was set up in 1940 by the international agreement known as the "Pátzcuaro Convention". It is one of the specialized organizations of the Organization of American States, and its members are: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, United States of America and Venezuela; in other words the countries in the Americas which have a sizeable indigenous population.

2. In signing the Pátzcuaro Convention, the contracting Governments agreed "... to identify the problems affecting indigenous population groups within their jurisdiction and to cooperate on the basis of mutual respect (...) in solving the problems of the Indian peoples of the Americas through periodic meetings, an Inter-American Indian Institute and national Indian institutes ...".

3. During its 52 years of continuous activity, IAII has been a decisive factor in indigenism in the Americas. It has formed a bridge of understanding and harmony between the Governments of the region and indigenous populations; it has encouraged scientific study of the situation of indigenous communities and races; it has denounced the injustices to which they are subjected, as well as their low and impoverished state; it has promoted numerous plans, programmes, projects and actions of all kinds with a view to overcoming those conditions and achieving the well-being and development of the American Indians; it has been a constant driving force behind the indigenist policies of the Governments of the region.

4. Founded by eminent humanists and social scientists including Moisés Sáenz, Uriel García, Manuel Gamio and John Collier, IAII has been a centre for the work of generations of historians, sociologists, anthropologists, linguists, politicians and other specialists sympathetic to the plight of the American Indians. Many of these specialists have devoted their lives to defending the rights of American Indians and have fought to ensure them a better way of life.

5. The Institute has published hundreds of books and brochures, which are essential reading for those interested in the society, culture, struggles and interests of the American Indians and are a vital part of any library on current American society. Its 51-year-old journal, América Indígena (Indigenous America), is the most important and oldest journal entirely devoted to providing information on the Indian populations of America and the spread of and support for continental indigenism. Apart from América Indígena, since 1960 the Institute has been publishing Annario Indígena (Indigenist Yearbook) which aims to describe and report on the main events, insurrections and legislative advances concerning the Indian community occurring during the year in the Americas.

6. By 1989, IAII had held 10 Inter-American Indian Congresses, in which government officials, Indian leaders and social scientists participated. The eleventh Congress will be held in 1993, in Nicaragua.

7. Since its foundation, under the leadership of the eminent Mexican anthropologist Manuel Gamio, the Institute has actively pursued the scientific study of Indian populations, focusing attention on their most pressing problems and needs. Between 1966 and 1970, the Institute was headed by the well-known physician-anthropologist Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, who expanded its publishing activity significantly. Under the direction of Dr. Oscar Arze Quintanilla between 1977 and 1989, the Five-Year Plan of Indigenist Action was implemented, comprising hundreds of research projects, publications and special action in favour of Indian populations.

8. In 1990, under the direction of the leading Peruvian anthropologist Dr. José Matos Mar, the Institute adopted and launched a new indigenist policy based on the right of Indian populations to develop and to achieve well-being and modern living conditions, on their own cultural terms, while preserving their ethnic identity, languages and traditional lifestyle. The policy also called for the necessary openness to change on the part of American States with indigenous populations, and their redefinition as pluri-cultural and multi-ethnic societies. In support of this policy, the Inter-American Indian Institute has launched two broad continent-wide plans concerned, respectively, with encouraging the ethnic development of the American-Indian populations and developing the Inter-American Indian system.

The indigenous populations of America

9. If the populations of uncertain ethnic identity are excluded, the Indian population of the Americas at the beginning of the last decade of the twentieth century stands at between 30 and 40 million.

10. Despite the danger of imminent extinction that threatens many ethnic minorities across the continent, the overall Indian population is rising. Both the rapid pace of growth of this population and the substantial increase in the numbers migrating to urban areas make it difficult to define the frontiers of the indigenous universe.

11. Without taking into account the groups of uncertain ethnic origin among the urban populations, Indians currently constitute a minority amounting to between 5 and 6 per cent of the total population of the Americas. However, the proportion varies greatly from one country to another. In some countries Indians constitute a fairly insignificant minority, but with figures of between 30 and 60 per cent of the total in certain countries, such as Bolivia, Guatemala, Peru and Ecuador, Indians not only constitute a sizeable part of the population, but their fate and situation are closely related to and linked with the overall situation and future of the countries concerned.

12. Generally, Indians are at the lower end of the social scale in the Americas. They are still depressed and discriminated against at the cultural, social, political and racial levels; they live oppressed by poverty and malnutrition and scourged by disease; they are subject to depredation of their environment by private interests and even by Governments; they are frequently the victims of open or covert attempts to exterminate or forcibly to assimilate and integrate them. In short, both rural and urban Indians constitute the stratus of society which is hit hardest by the acute poverty on the continent.

13. The legal system in some countries restricts the exercise of their civic rights by those who are not credited with fluency in the official language or are illiterate. In other countries, while the right to vote has been granted to illiterate and monolingual Indians, the latter are still unable fully to exercise that right, since they are totally conditioned in their economic, social and political life by the use of the official language.

14. In the slow and tortuous transition over the centuries from segregated race to exploited class, the Indians' social structures, way of life and psychological characteristics have been deeply distorted. The erosion of their indigenous traditions, knowledge and values has been compounded by the pervasion of elements of western cultures and a servility imposed by oppression and poverty. It is an indisputable fact that the current alienation of the American Indian population has been caused by 500 years of colonial and republican dominion, and that the development of their potential is hampered by the structure of internal domination that persists in Latin America.

15. Despite all this, the Indians who have survived the long process of depopulation and dominion preserve a vigorous sense of their historical continuity. The Americas have witnessed a revival of the Indians in recent decades. The indigenous groups are asserting their cultural origins; they are organizing themselves in the new landscape offered by recent events in their respective countries and, through the establishment of various social alliances, they are striving to forge a new, forward-looking identity from their inherited traditions and the modern environment.

16. During the same period. an intermediate sector of the population, which is difficult to define, has steadily been growing. It members, while maintaining links with their place of origin, are playing an increasingly active role in contemporary political, social, cultural and economic life. Their habitat includes both rural and urban areas, town and country. In the cities, the older members of the group are bilingual, but there is a marked tendency among the younger members to forget their native tongues and to adopt the modern urban lifestyle. They are well-known for their contribution to the modern economy and market, either as modern livestock-breeders and farmers, or as labourers, the urban underemployed, small shopkeepers, operators of small-scale industrial and service enterprises and workers in medium-sized and large enterprises. There is also a group on the fringes of society making a precarious living from undeclarable occupations. In some Latin American countries, that group, together with the urban lower classes, are emerging as the majority which seeks to challenge the official order and impose a new order reflecting the true pluri-cultural nature of society.

17. Furthermore, the proverbial indifference of Governments and political parties in the Americas to the "indigenous issue" has disappeared. In its place there is widespread concern, accompanied by actions which have generally demonstrated goodwill rather than a real understanding of the nature of the problem. At the governmental and intergovernmental levels, the most common response to the mobilization of and pressures from Indians and peasants has been economic development action, which has led to the setting up of a host of national, international, governmental and non-governmental, secular and religious agencies for the provision of technical assistance and the planning and implementation of projects of all kinds. Such agencies have been criticized for their verticality and paternalism, the inappropriateness of the technology used, the serious ecological changes resulting from some of the projects implemented, as well as the tendency, in some cases, towards semi-compulsory cultural homogenization and the loss of identity and traditions. There has also been objection to the dispersion and bureaucratization of efforts. A new trend of opinion is now emerging, however, which emphasizes the importance of recovering indigenous traditions and technology and safeguarding the human rights of Indian populations, as well as the need to preserve the habitat and maintain ecological equilibrium.

UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/1992/6
17 June 1992

ENGLISH
Original: SPANISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Working Group on Indigenous Populations
Tenth session
20-31 July 1992
Item 5 of the provisional agenda

REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS PERTAINING TO THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS OF INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS

Information received from non-governmental organizations

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GE.92-12556/9932a

INTRODUCTION

1. By its resolution 1982/34 of 7 May 1982, the Economic and Social Council authorized the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to establish annually a working group on indigenous populations to review developments pertaining to the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous populations, including information requested by the Secretary-General annually, and to give special attention to the evolution of standards concerning the rights of indigenous populations.

2. The Sub-Commission, in its resolution 1991/30 of 29 August 1991, requested the Secretary-General to transmit the report of the Working Group to indigenous peoples and non-governmental organizations. The Commission on Human Rights made the same request in its resolution 1992/44 of 3 March 1992. In accordance with these resolutions, appropriate communications were sent to the above-mentioned organizations.

3. The present document contains replies received as of 10 June 1992 from indigenous and non-governmental organizations pertaining to the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous populations. Further replies, if any, will be included in addenda to this document.

INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' ORGANIZATIONS

"Tupaj Katari" Indian movement

The immeasurable debt owed to the indigenous peoples

4. In the light of a critical and constructive analysis - taking full account of its causes and effects - of the quincentenary of the unprecedented aggression committed against the Amerindian nations exactly 500 years ago, we can assert without fear of contradiction that the decisive factor in the arrival of European colonialism on the Indo-American continent, with its infinitely bloody consequences, was, then as now, economic interest, the hunger and thirst for dominion over the wealth which mother earth so generously bestows upon us. Material interests completely transformed gold and silver, which the indigenous peoples had hitherto used as ornaments and for ritual purposes, into ordinary goods coveted for their monetary value, thereby giving rise to potential conflicts between the universe and the Indians, between its wealth and their labour.

5. Within the rationale of the war to conquer and subjugate indigenous peoples and nations, gold and silver, precious stones and nature's bounty have undoubtedly constituted the real driving-force in all periods of colonial history and an overriding obsession in the minds of the colonizers. Nothing other than economic factors, material interests, boundless egotistical ambition, and the desire for profit and riches at all costs can explain the reasoning of those who, against all reason, justify the destruction of indigenous civilizations, the annihilation of ancestral cultures, the sacking and pillaging of everything of commercial or monetary value, and the most barbarous forms of genocide perpetrated by the most inhuman methods throughout

five centuries. There can be no other objective explanation or any historical or moral justification. Attempts to invoke the so-called "mission to civilize barbarous peoples, to transmit culture from one people to another and to spread Christianity or to evangelize godless Indians" are but gross and hypocritical pretexts put forward to falsify historical truth.

6. The pillaging and sacking of the gold and silver violently wrested from their true owners is not merely a subject of historical interest, but an issue of outstanding topical importance because of its direct implications for the profound economic and social crisis affecting the peoples of the Americas. It is, of course, impossible either to determine the exact amount or to set the economic and financial value of the huge riches that were removed and carried off to the colonial mother countries, and to Spain in particular, thereby causing immeasurable material and moral loss and damage to the indigenous peoples and nations. However, sound data and figures are fortunately now available and enable us to make a partial estimate of the amount of gold and silver that were stolen with complete impunity from the Indo-American territories.

7. Among the distinguished authors who have written on the subject, the American historian and economist, Earl J. Hamilton, is particularly noteworthy. His research into the "quantitative theory of money" has made it possible to arrive at a rough estimate of the amount of the two main metals, gold and silver, removed from the Amerindian continent. In 1929 and subsequently in 1934, E.J. Hamilton undertook the arduous task of dusting off the documents in archives of the Casas de contratación (departments where records relating to the Spanish colonies are kept) in Seville and Madrid. On the basis of the data and figures to which he had access, he reached the following conclusion: the conquistadores carried off some 16,900 tons of silver and between 180 and 200 tons of gold from the Americas between 1503 and 1660. To this huge loot plundered by the colonizers should be added the incalculable amounts of gold and silver lost in various shipwrecks caused by international piracy and organized smuggling. In fact, the cow belonged to the Spanish crown, but others drank its milk.

8. According to other research, however, the records in Seville and Madrid are far from providing historians with the exact figures for the colossal and awesome amount of gold and silver that left the Americas every year for Spain. Among those authors that have provided fresh and valuable data for a relative and partial assessment of the colonial booty, we would mention the historian Joël Cornette, who in a recent article published in the French periodical L'Histoire advances the astronomical figures of 26,000 tons of silver and 17,000 tons of gold, extracted from open seams in the Americas during the period 1500-1600.

9. In his pamphlet entitled "Oro de la conquista versus deuda externa" (The gold of the conquest versus external debt), the journalist S. Cabrera, making estimates based on the amount of wealth referred to in legend and on the intrinsic value, came up with the mind-boggling figures of 21,500 tons of silver and 8,600 tons of gold extracted by the conquistadores. He presents the figures as follows:

> "8,600 tons of gold at US$ 11 million per ton comes to about US$ 95 billion; 21,500 tons of silver at US$ 140,000 per ton, comes to about US$ 3 billion. Consequently, the total amount of gold and silver extracted from the Americas up to 1600 was US$ 98 billion".

Thus, if we calculate the dollar values of gold and silver quoted on the London and Zurich exchanges, we can assert unerringly that Spain actually owes a great debt to our peoples and nations and that the colonial States bear direct or indirect responsibility for our countries' damaging underdevelopment.

10. The information contained in this paper on economic rights and the arguments put forward would be truncated and incomplete if we failed to mention the insatiable despoliation of the Cerro Rico in Potosí, whose fabulous wealth has contributed to the splendour of the old world, to its original capital accumulation, and paradoxically, to the suffering and impoverishment of the indigenous peoples. The amount of silver extracted over the centuries verges on the realm of legend and fantasy, and far outreaches human imagination. According to an oft-cited comparison, the silver ore mined would have been sufficient to build a bridge from Potosí to the palaces in Madrid, Seville and Valladolid. Thanks to Bolivian chroniclers and foreign researchers, we know that between 1545 and 1774 the value extracted from the mines in the silver mountain was 820,513,893 duros, i.e. an amount greater than the total money then in circulation in the European countries. In addition, according to partial data from the Casa de la Moneda (Mint) in Potosí, the wealth extracted from the Cerro Rico de Potosí between the beginning of the colonial period and independence in 1925 was approximately 2.474 billion billion pesos, currently worth the astounding figure of US$ 5,566,500,000 billion, which were surrendered to Spain.

11. And paradoxically, as the distinguished writer Galeano has observed, "The Indians have suffered and continue to suffer from the curse of their own wealth. That Potosí society, ailing from its ostentation and extravagence, only left Bolivia the distant memory of its splendour, the ruins of its temples and palaces, and 8 million Indian corpses that lie in the deep galleries of the once resplendent Potosí, the treasury of the world, the king of the mountains and the envy of kings".

12. The stream of wealth that flowed from the Americas leads us to a striking conclusion: for five centuries, the peoples and nations of this corner of the continent have been building up the fortune of the European mother countries. Like the fabulous amount of gold that belonged to the indigenous peoples, the flow of silver from Potosí made a huge contribution to the development of capitalism in Europe. In the past, silver drove the economy of Spain, and the economic development of Europe has been largely financed by the resources originating from generous Indian lands; nowadays the pillaging and exploitation are perpetrated by means of legal instruments and weapons, such as the external debt.

13. The debt phenomenon is an integral part of the historical continuum of the colonial process which began in 1492 and corresponds to the strategy of neo-colonial domination pursued by the rich countries against the poor countries. The umbilical cord nourishing this curse against the indigenous peoples is, and once again derives from, the colonial heritage. Because of

its disastrous repercussions on economic and social life, the external debt is a perverse tool of the world capitalist system, which was created precisely with the colonization of the Americas and which makes possible the enormous transfer of wealth from the poor countries to the rich and powerful countries. For example, every year the debtor countries of the third world pay more than US$ 50 billion in interest and amortization to the industrialized countries. Where Latin America is concerned, the situation is becoming increasingly dramatic. According to the Guadalajara Declaration, adopted in Mexico in 1991, those countries that had incurred a debt of over US$ 222.5 billion in 1980 had to pay US$ 365.9 billion in the past decade in profits and interest. The debt doubled in 10 years. In 1990, the external debt of the Americas as a whole was US$ 423 billion, or approximately US$ 1,500 a head. In other words, Latin America has become an exporter of capital to the economies of the industrialized world, to the tune of US$ 30 billion a year. These US$ 30 billion, which the poor peoples of the Indo-American continent - and in particular its indigenous populations - pay each year as usurious profits to the capitalist world, are equivalent to 3,000 tons of gold at a price of US$ 10 million a ton. A rough estimate of the capital outflow and other transactions between 1982 and 1990 would reveal the exorbitant figure of US$ 200 billion, equivalent to approximately 20,000 tons of gold looted from the peoples of Latin America.

14. The debt has thus become a form of bondage and the debt-ridden economies have become subject economies - a clear manifestation of neo-colonialism. Thanks to this more sophisticated mechanism of modern times, natural resources are being unscrupulously pillaged, the labour force is being exploited, and authoritarian political structures and Governments are being imposed, in accordance with the strategic interests of the North and the élites among the ruling class in the South. Which leads to the following conclusion: the debt is the natural offspring of economic dependence and political subordination, a factor in the social and cultural regression of peoples and nations, and a fundamental obstacle to the solution of the profound crisis besetting the indigenous populations, who have been reduced today to the status of pariahs and beggars around the throne of gold.

15. According to more recent information contained in the Final Declaration of the Second Regional Conference on Poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Quito in November 1990, the ranks of the poor are filled by some 270 million individuals, in other words, 62 per cent of the total population, while some 84 million eke out their existence in conditions of absolute poverty. The injustice is such that the poverty besetting these 270 million contrasts starkly with the opulence of small minorities, who in some cases make up less than 5 per cent of the population, but account for a considerable proportion of consumption, as was stated in the Guadalajara Declaration. The Chairman of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has observed that dealing with the social problem in the Americas is essential in the overall approach to the regional economy, since between 40 and 45 per cent of the population are in the poverty category.

16. This widespread impoverishment has a particularly brutal impact on children. According to a report by UNICEF, some 500,000 children die each year in the third world as a direct result of the debt policy. As far as the Americas are concerned, one child dies from disease and hunger every minute,

while 100 million more are in such a state of neglect that they live, eat and sleep in the streets. The neo-liberal adjustments introduced under the auspices of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have given rise to a potential social debt that threatens to explode in various parts of the region. In actual fact, these two financial institutions are the main instruments for the looting and the destruction of the environment, and bear responsibility for the human misery.

17. The repayment of the external debt is morally reprehensible, no longer of historical relevance and materially impossible. To conclude, the former colonial mother countries are ethically and morally obliged to shoulder their historical and political responsibility to make good the immeasurable damage caused by the war of aggression, by compensating its victims, in accordance with the international standards and instruments in force.